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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT	Living Conditions in Dzerzhinsk	DATE DISTR.	21 October 1954
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Housing in Dzerzhinsk

1. Apartment houses are constructed of stone or wood and have one or more stories. Each building contains two to four apartments; almost every room is occupied by a family. Members of the privileged classes have more living space, but there are no residential areas inhabited solely by these families; the division between them and ordinary workers' families occurs within the apartment houses, where quarters are assigned according to requirements and qualifications. There are some one-family houses for members of the intelligentsia. All housing is overcrowded, even by Soviet standards, because construction has not kept up with the influx of new workers. Furnishings are very primitive. Stores carry only single pieces of furniture.
2. Since each enterprise manages its own housing, some division into sectors occurs. Usually, though, a number of enterprises will have housing developments on the same street.

Clothing

3. Between 1946 and 1950, many men wore parts of their military uniforms because discharged soldiers were allowed to keep their uniforms. When they bought civilian clothes, they sold their uniforms at the bazaar.
4. A person's economic level is revealed by his clothing because prices are very high. Padded trousers, jackets, and coats, and felt boots (valenki) are common apparel. In warm weather, inexpensive cloth shoes and light clothing are worn.
5. Clothing is sold at the bazaar or sometimes directly from trucks. Despite frequent inspections, there is an extensive black market in stolen goods at

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the bazaar. For example, leather boots can be purchased more cheaply there than in a State store, because they are made of stolen leather. Clothes can also be made to order, but this is very expensive.

6. People generally do their own laundry. Old women also take in washing to earn money.
7. People use ordinary potato sacks or canvas bags to carry their purchases or things to be sold.
8. Although little attention is paid to regularity in haircuts or shaves, the barber shops are crowded before a holiday. Barber shops are staffed almost wholly by women, who undergo a six months' apprenticeship. At seven years of age, boys must appear at school with their heads clean shaven. Soldiers, and frequently hospital patients, must also have their heads shaven. This measure is probably aimed at preventing the spread of lice. Hospitals have permanent hairdressers who attend even the bed patients. At barber shops, compresses and massages are also available; a young girl is employed especially to prepare the hot compresses. The compress is placed on the face (the more distinguished clients have a fresh towel placed there first for the sake of kultura); the face is then massaged; and finally a cold compress is applied. Prices are as follows: Hair cut, one and a half to two rubles; shave, one ruble; shave with compress, two rubles; cologne, two kopeks. Barbers do not accept tips; it offends their pride to do so.
9. Women like to wear jewelry, usually costume jewelry. They also wear nail polish, generally dark red. In food and other stores, the saleswomen are compelled by State regulations to wear nail polish; a manicure service is furnished them free of charge. Women also wear powder and lipstick and, in general, are very concerned about their appearance.

Shopping

10. Food is sold at department stores (univermag), food stores (gastronom), special stores, and at the bazaar. There is a shortage of flour and sugar and, sometimes, bread. A typical phenomenon is for all goods of a certain kind to disappear suddenly from all the stores in the city.
11. Stores are open from nine to six or from ten to eight. Individual stores are open from noon until midnight. Bazaars are open from nine until dusk. Stores are open on Sundays until six o'clock.
12. Vodka, beer, sweet wines, champagne, cognac, and a little white wine are sold in food stores, at stands, and in restaurants.
13. There is a good selection of toilet articles for sale, but the average citizen buys only cheap soap at the bazaar. Most of the razor blades are dull; Czech blades, which are better, are also available.

Morale

14. People complain about petty officials without getting into trouble, but they are always careful to add that, if high Party or government officials knew about the unfortunate state of affairs in a given office, it would be remedied. Scandals concerning corruption and graft among officials are widely discussed.
15. The average citizen is very interested in sports; a football match is always an event.

Population

16. People from all parts of the Baltic, particularly Estonia, are employed in

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the chemical plants. However, the only unnaturalized aliens in the city are the German specialists, who come under special regulations.

Electric Power

17. Current is supplied by power plants located near the town. The current is alternating, 220 volts. It is transmitted from a generator at 3,000 volts and then passes through transformer stations. Charges are based on the watt capacity of electrical appliances; therefore, most of the people keep their lights on all the time. A person can, however, have a meter installed for about 300 rubles. There are separate wires leading to the houses of important officials, because the current is cut off from the rest of the population when the monthly allowance is used up.

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